

REMARKS

The Official Action mailed March 17, 2009, has been received and its contents carefully noted. This response is filed within three months of the mailing date of the Official Action and therefore is believed to be timely without extension of time. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that this response is being timely filed.

The Applicant notes with appreciation the consideration of the Information Disclosure Statements filed on December 12, 2003; February 25, 2004; September 21, 2004; May 10, 2005; April 21, 2006; March 13, 2007; August 16, 2007; April 16, 2008; July 8, 2008; and December 16, 2008.

A further Information Disclosure Statement is submitted herewith and consideration of this Information Disclosure Statement is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-12, 14, 15, 17-19, 21-23, 25-27 and 29-53 were pending in the present application prior to the above amendment. The Applicant notes with appreciation the indication of the allowability of dependent claims 30-33 (Box 7, Office Action Summary; page 22, Paper No. 20090304).

The Official Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-12, 14, 15, 17-19, 21-23, 25-27, 29 and 34-53 as obvious based on the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,414,441 to Fries, U.S. Publication No. 2001/0015256 to Yamazaki, U.S. Patent No. 5,567,967 to Kusumoto and U.S. Patent No. 6,360,854 to Barnardo, either alone or in combination with one or more of: U.S. Patent No. 6,061,246 to Oh, U.S. Patent No. 6,321,067 to Suga, U.S. Publication No. 2001/0038098 to Yamazaki, JP 59-22961 to Yoneya and U.S. Publication No. 2002/0163834 to Scheuerlein.

In response and in accordance with the statement of allowed subject matter (Id.), independent claims 1, 4, 7 and 10 have been amended to include the allowable features of dependent claims 30-33, respectively. Therefore, independent claims 1, 4, 7 and 10, as amended, recite allowable subject matter, and the above-referenced rejections are believed to be moot. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-12, 14, 15, 17-19, 21-23,


25-27, 29 and 34-53 are now pending in the present application, of which claims 1, 4, 7 and 10 are independent, and all of which are believed to be in condition for allowance.

The Official Action objects to dependent claims 2, 5, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17-19, 21-23, 25-27 and 29-53 and suggests that "An article" be changed to "The article." In response, the claims have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections are in order and respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge fees under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16, 1.17, 1.20(a), 1.20(b), 1.20(c), and 1.20(d) (except the Issue Fee) which may be required now or hereafter, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-2280.

Respectfully submitted,



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